

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-9 remain in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 10-11 have been cancelled.

The Examiner's interpretation in the section entitled "Claim Observations" on page 2 of the above-identified Office action is correct and the language of claim 1 has been amended accordingly.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112" on pages 2-3 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-9 have been rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that the recitation "providing a connecting line directly connecting the further gas outlet opening to one of the inlet openings ..." in claim 1 is confusing because metes and bounds of "directly" is not fully understood.

The term "directly" in this recitation has been deleted and a further recitation "the valve having an inlet and an outlet,

the further gas outlet opening being directly connected to the inlet of the valve and the outlet of the valve being directly connected to the one of the inlet openings located upstream of the distributor plate" has been added.

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for cosmetic and/or clarificatory reasons. The changes are neither provided for overcoming the prior art nor do they narrow the scope of the claims for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103" on pages 3-5 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1-3 and 5-9 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Vaartstra (US Pat. No. 6,159,855) in view of Wang et al. (US Pat. No. 5,871,811) in further view of Tanaka et al. (US Pat. No. 6,039,834) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a); claim 4 has been rejected as being unpatentable over Vaartstra in view of Wang et al. in further view of Tanaka et al. and further in view of Arvidson (US Pat. No. 5,118,485) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The rejections have been noted and claim 1 has been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Support for the changes is found in Fig. 2 of the drawings.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, inter alia:

providing a connecting line connecting the further gas outlet opening to one of the inlet openings located upstream of the distributor plate; and

configuring, in the connecting line, a valve for controlling gas flow, the valve having an inlet and an outlet, the further gas outlet opening being directly connected to the inlet of the valve and the outlet of the valve being directly connected to the one of the inlet openings located upstream of the distributor plate.

The Examiner has stated that Vaartstra and Wang et al., collectively, fail to teach providing a connecting line connecting the further gas outlet opening to one of the inlet openings with a valve in the connecting line for controlling gas flow (see the last paragraph on page 4 of the Office action). However, the Examiner has further stated that Tanaka et al. teach an upgrade for a CVD system that has such a configuration. The Examiner has referred to column 15, lines 25-51 of Tanaka et al. as support.

However, according to the text of column 15, lines 25-51 of Tanaka et al., a plasma generator module 300 can be connected with a CVD reactor and an outlet opening of the plasma generator module 300 can be connected with an inlet opening of the CVD reactor chamber. The CVD reactor chamber can be cleaned with the plasma generated in the plasma generator 300. Nowhere do Tanaka et al. disclose the features related to the connecting line and the valve according to claim 1 of the instant application.

In addition, according to claim 1 of the instant application, the connecting line connects inlet and outlet openings of one and the same reactor chamber. In contrast, in Tanaka et al. different reactor chambers are connected.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

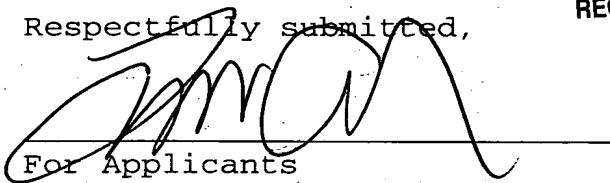
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-9 are solicited.

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In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to 37 CFR Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



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